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BIOGRAPHY.

THE LIFE OF SIMON PETER, THE APOSTLE.

[*Concluded from page* 11.]

HONOURED as St. Peter had been while his Lord was on earth, he became, after his ascension, a still more distinguished character; and when the time was fully come for opening the gospel dispensation, and the apostles were baptized with the Holy Ghost, St. Peter was the first who exercised the ministry entrusted to him by Christ. It would be superfluous to pass any encomiums on the close reasoning and energetic eloquence with which he pressed on the consciences of his auditors, that Jesus, whom they had *crucified, was Lord and Christ*. The success which attended his discourse sufficiently proves its power and excellence: three thousand souls were converted to the faith; a circumstance which could not fail to encourage the apostles to prosecute, with unwearied diligence, the great work they had so happily begun.

In contemplating the wonders of this memorable day, we are led to observe, that the mighty rushing wind and fiery tongues were only transient symbols. Other miraculous gifts of the Spirit, having accomplished the purposes for which they were bestowed, have long disappeared; nor are they likely to revive, at least until God bare his arm to bring his church out of the wilderness. Those, however, which constitute the very life of our religion remain. The enlightening, sanctifying, and consolatory influences of the Spirit, then shed abundantly on the apostles, are still promised to every believer; and how much are these to

be preferred to miraculous gifts! Let any one read the account of St. Paul's perils, labours, and sufferings, and he will perceive that even miraculous gifts were inadequate to such a warfare. They overcome not the world. They reconcile not the soul to want, contempt, pain, and death. Those supernatural weapons must have blasted the hands of the apostles, had they not been under the guidance of divine wisdom; had they not been armed with *power from on high;* and had not the effect of the Spirit's effusion been a courage, zeal, patience, disinterestedness, deadness to the world, and devotedness to God, far greater than human nature was able to exert. From this æra we read of no contests among them for pre-eminence; we remark no confident rashness, no intemperate zeal, no dastardly fear. Firm, tranquil, united, they exhibit their heavenly conversation with meekness of wisdom. They are the patterns of the doctrine they teach. For wealth they entertain the most perfect indifference; they seek no honour from man; they preach not themselves; and they ever speak and act, not as lords over God's heritage, but as helpers of their faith. For them, life has no allurements; the grave, no terror; death, no sting. They are crucified to the world and the world to them; their affections and conversation are in heaven. Here we lose sight of the fishermen of Galilee, and recognise the accomplished apostles, whose character, no less than their high office, stamps them the best and greatest of men.

Such were the benefactors of the world, who, after planting truth, and peace, and righteousness among civilized and savage nations, to give new vigour to those noble plants, gladly watered them with their blood. Venerable names! ever dear to the true followers of Christ! Ye still live and speak, and your fires still, from time to time, warm the cold bosom of the fainting church. O Lord, arise and look upon the church! Bring us back into the old paths, and establish us firmly in the doctrine and spirit of thy holy apostles.

We may remark, indeed, that a measure of the same grace which was bestowed on the apostles is necessary to every christian, is promised to every christian, nay, is given to every christian: and these sanctifying influences of the Spirit, though they are the most valuable of his gifts, and in themselves as miraculous as any; yet being thus generally diffused, and their presence being evidenced only by the effects they produce in enlightening, comforting, and purifying the children of God, and not by any new or wonderful manifestation; they are usually called common and

ordinary, in contradistinction to those spiritual powers which were intrusted only to a few for special purposes, which manifested themselves in an extraordinary manner.

That St. Peter did not conceive the promise of the Holy Ghost to be limited to the apostles is evident from the words of his sermon on this occasion. *Be baptized every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.* If it be objected that St. Peter spoke of miraculous gifts, it should also be proved that the three thousand converts were actually favoured with them; a point it would be difficult to prove. The purposes also for which, in scripture, the Holy Spirit is said to be given, are of universal concern, as well as of the first magnitude. *He convinces the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment;* regenerates and seals the sons of God; *sheds abroad the love of God in their hearts; helps their infirmities; mortifies the deeds of the body;* comforts them under all their troubles, and is to them the pledge of heavenly glory. As the advent of the Messiah was the great promise of the Old Testament, so is the gift of the Spirit the great promise of the New. Far be it from us to bind our christian brethren to our particular ideas and modes of expression; but in the fearless spirit of St. Peter we testify, that he who in substance renounces this doctrine, renounces christianity itself. We have moralized christianity, and philosophized morality, until millions have returned to that stupid infidelity from which the apostles recovered the world. The spirit of the times requires that we should speak their doctrines in their strongest tones; for if the throne and the altar are to stand in this day of fearless innovation, their friends must rally beneath the banners of primitive christianity.

A few days after, St. Peter had an opportunity of confirming his doctrine by the miraculous cure of a cripple, who sat at the gate of the temple soliciting alms. While the wondering multitude flocked to this sight, St. Peter improved the miracle, by preaching to them that Christ whom they and the rulers had put to death; and so powerfully did the Holy Ghost enforce his words, that five thousand souls were added to the church.

As the apostles were speaking to the people, *the priests and captain of the Temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.* Strange association! Yet such, alas! is the nature of man, that different ages and countries have had Sadducees to accuse the ministers of truth, priests to condemn, and captains to execute their decrees. By these champions of Jewish orthodoxy were the

apostles and the restored cripple apprehended, and on the morrow brought before the high priest and rulers. To them St. Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, fearlessly declared, *that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head stone of the corner, neither is there salvation in any other.*

Astonished at the boldness of the apostles, and incapable of contesting so notorious a miracle, these bad men determined to silence those whom they could not confute. They, therefore, *threatened them, and commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus.* But to this prohibition the apostles calmly replied: *Whether it be right, in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we have both heard and seen.*

How different was the conduct of St. Peter now, from what it had been a few months before in the palace of the high priest. His danger was greater; he stood before the same bloody tribunal which had condemned his Lord; but he now fought with spiritual; then with carnal weapons: then his courage was his own; now, it was the gift of the Spirit. This St. Luke indicates, when he prefaces St. Peter's defence by remarking, that he was *filled with the Holy Ghost;* a mode of expression more frequently used to prepare us for some noble exertion of christian temper, than to introduce a miraculous act.

As soon as Peter and John had reported to the brethren the threats of the council, they all prepared to meet the storm, by calling on God to support and strengthen them. Their prayer was heard, for *they were all* immediately *filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the word of God with boldness.* The Church was also of *one heart and soul,* and *had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.*

But the liberal and disinterested spirit of richer Christians proved a snare to Ananias and his wife Sapphira. Their covetousness and hypocrisy might have been chastised more mildly; but as it was of the last consequence that bad men should be deterred from joining the church, and that believers should be excited to work out their salvation with fear, it pleased God to make a signal display of his power and omniscience on this occasion. No sooner, therefore, had St. Peter charged them with their crime, than they were immediately struck with death in the

presence of the church. *Great fear fell in consequence on the church, and on as many as heard it;* and while *multitudes* of true believers *were added to the Lord,* no one of a different character *durst join himself to them.* Numerous *signs and wonders* were at the same time wrought by the apostles; and the sick were brought into the streets upon beds and couches, that *the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow* some of them. Also *a multitude came from the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.*

The amazing prosperity of the church excited the *envy of the high priest and of the Sadducees, and they put the apostles,* as felons, *into the common prison.* But the great Shepherd watched over their valuable lives, and sent his angel to free them, and to command them to repair to the temple, and there *to speak all the words of this life.* Being found the next morning preaching to the people, they were a second time conducted before the rulers, whom, while they justified their own conduct in obeying God rather than man, they charged with being the murderers of him *whom God had exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.* When the rulers *heard that they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.* From this sanguinary purpose they were dissuaded by the wise and moderate advice of Gamaliel. Therefore after they had beaten them, and had also threatened, and again commanded them not to teach in the name of Jesus, they dismissed the apostles, who retired, *rejoicing that they were worthy to suffer shame for his name sake.*

It is probably not without design, that the Holy Ghost so carefully remarks this association of the Sadducees with the priests, while no mention is made of the Pharisees, a sect equally powerful and more zealous. Though some of their body, doubtless, concurred in these proceedings, yet they were evidently not the leading party. The Pharisee Gamaliel at this time defeated the design of the rulers, and afterward we find the whole body rising up against the Sadducees in St. Paul's defence. St. Paul is, indeed, an example to what excesses a false zeal may lead a man who means to do God service, and similar examples may unquestionably be adduced; but the history of the church, we conceive, will authorize the remark, that the majority of persecutors have been men of corrupt minds, profligate morals, and infidel principles; zeal for God being merely the mask with which they conceal their secular motives and infernal passions.

But from these bloody minded men let us return to the apostles, who are prepared to shed their own blood for the cause of truth; and from them we may learn the temper in which christians ought to suffer persecution. They calmly justify their conduct, confirm their doctrine, and admit no compromise of any part of their duty: they are firm and undismayed: they betray no anger, and indulge neither complaints, revilings, nor threats: they do not even deprecate the resentment of their persecutors. How dignified their conduct! how infinitely superior to the irritation and petulance, the sneers and contempt with which christians of the present day are disposed to treat not only those who persecute the church, but one another, and that for points of difference implicating in a very trivial, if in any degree, the common salvation.

Persecution soon waxed more violent, and Stephen was the first who sealed the truth with his blood. Many others probably suffered about the same time, and some weak believers were intimidated to blaspheme Christ. The persecution was, however, productive of some good; for several zealous and able ministers, fleeing from Jerusalem, preached the gospel with success in other places. In Samaria the ministry of the deacon Philip was so well received, that, in the beginning of the next year Peter and John were delegated to confirm his converts, who, finding that none of the believers in that region, though baptized in the name of Jesus, had yet been honoured with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, laid their hands on some of them, and imparted to them a share of their own powers. Among these converts was Simon the magician, whose attention had been arrested by the miracles wrought by Philip, and who, from motives which were either wholly or in part sinister, had joined the church. Instigated by covetousness, he betrayed his character, by offering to purchase of the apostles the power of communicating the Holy Ghost to others. St. Peter rejected his offer with abhorrence, *severely reproved his wickedness*, and exhorted him to pray, if, *perhaps*, the thought of his heart might be forgiven him.

From this transaction the purchase of ecclesiastical benefices has been termed simony, a shameful traffic, which numerous expedients have been adopted to prevent. But it is to be apprehended that the spirit of Simon extends farther than to the purchase of livings, and that all those will be considered by Christ as actuated by it, who enter into the christian ministry from motives of emolument merely. And, surely, there is no prejudice which operates more fatally against christianity, than the too prevalent idea

that its ministry is a trade, which may be taken up and conducted on the same principles as any other occupation.

When the object of his mission to Samaria was fulfilled, St. Peter returned to Jerusalem, where he found the church again flourishing in peace; the most active of its persecutors having been converted to the faith. How long he continued at Jerusalem is not certain; but we next hear of him visiting the churches in other quarters. The miracles he performed at Lydda and at Joppa, particularly the restoration of Tabitha to life, were made the means of turning many to the Lord.

It was at Joppa that Peter had that remarkable vision which was intended to prepare him for the admission of the Gentiles into the church of Christ. While he was meditating on the vision, messengers arrived from Cæsarea, sent by *Cornelius, a just man, who feared God*, and who had been *warned by an angel* to request a visit from him. Being admonished by the Spirit to accompany them, he obeyed, and when on the next day he arrived at Cæsarea, he *found the kinsmen and near friends* of Cornelius assembled with him. To this company the apostle preached the forgiveness of sins through faith in a crucified Saviour, and while he was speaking, *the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word*. The Jews who came with Peter were astonished when they saw the Holy Ghost poured out on the Gentiles: but the apostle gladly recognised them as heirs of the promise of life, and commanded them to be baptized, observing that that seal of the covenant could not, with propriety, be refused to those whom God had evidently received and acknowledged as his children.

By the whole of this transaction we are taught a lesson of charity and forbearance. We see that various preparatory measures were deemed necessary to obviate the prejudices of the apostles themselves; and that though divinely inspired, all those things which it concerned them to know were not revealed at once, but were communicated to them as the occasion required; a circumstance which ought to check the headstrong confidence of young christians in their own knowledge and acquirements. On the other hand, the excellent temper of St. Peter, in laying aside the prejudices of the Jewish church, when he saw *the hearts* of these Gentile believers *purified by faith*, is worthy the imitation of all the ministers of God. Could we so far subdue our prejudices as cordially to embrace all real christians, though their knowledge and attainments should be inferior to our own, peace and brotherly love would increase; and, with the divine blessing, we might hope to see the followers of Christ become one fold under one shepherd.

By this catholic spirit the apostles at Jerusalem appear to have been influenced; for no sooner had St. Peter explained to them what had passed, than they all cheerfully acquiesced and glorified God for *having given repentance unto life unto the Gentiles.* Let those whose blind partiality for their own opinions induces them to depreciate the labours of all who differ from them, however these labours may promote the interests of christianity, carefully consider the conduct of the apostles in cheerfully sacrificing their prejudices to the glory of Christ, and to the salvation of mens' souls. And may we learn to regard each other in the same spirit of love with which our common Lord views all his followers.

About the year of our Lord 43 or 44, Herod Agrippa drew the sword against the church, and finding that the death of James, the brother of John, gratified the Jews, farther to ingratiate himself with that stubborn people, he committed Peter to prison. Afflicted and alarmed at the martyrdom of James, the church made fervent supplication for the life of Peter. Their prayers were heard; he was freed by an angel from his chains, and, after informing the other apostles of his gracious deliverance, he retired from Jerusalem to parts where he might serve the Lord without molestation.

At this time he is said to have visited Rome, and to have staid there several years; but this is highly improbable. In the year of our Lord 62, when St. Paul entered that city as the prisoner of Jesus Christ, the Jews living in it appear to have been entirely ignorant of Christians, except as *a sect every where spoken against.* But we cannot believe that they could have been thus ignorant had so eminent a character as St. Peter, distinguished as the apostle of the circumcision, previously visited that place, and much less had he made any considerable stay there.

In the year of Christ 51, we find St. Peter at Jerusalem, when the controversy between the judaizing christians and the Gentiles was submitted to the decision of the apostles. St. Peter was the first who offered his sentiments on the point in question. He argued, that as the Lord had graciously purified the hearts of the Gentiles by faith, and had attested that grace by miraculous gifts, it would be tempting God to insist on their observance of circumcision, and other rites of the ceremonial law. These he declared to be a yoke that neither they nor their fathers had been able to bear. To St. Peter's counsel, modified by St. James, and confirmed by the account which Paul and Barnabas gave of what the Lord had done among the Gentiles by their ministry, they all agreed; and the Gentile christians were only commanded to abstain from idolatry and fornication, and from eating blood and

strangled animals. The two first were evidently incompatible with christianity, and the two last were enjoined as temporary regulations, necessary to preserve peace in the church; for it was evident that no familiar association could subsist between Jews and Gentiles, if meats were served up at table which the Jews could not see without abhorrence. Nor can this regulation be censured. Aware by experience of the force of their national prejudices, it became the wisdom and piety of the apostles to bear with their weak brethren, and as no plea of conscience could be urged by the Gentiles for eating such meats, their abstaining from them was a tribute due to the mother church.

Not long after, St. Peter visited the christians at Antioch, and associated freely with them, until some zealots came from Jerusalem, and induced him to withdraw from their society. This disingenuous conduct gave offence to the Gentiles, and cherished the prejudices of the Jews; and as it threatened to impair the usefulness of St. Paul's ministry, it drew from him a just reproof. To this reprehension St. Peter seems to have submitted with a meekness and candour becoming his character. The error into which he fell shows strongly the infirmity adhering to the best of men, and the necessity of bringing the highest human authority to the test of scripture; and also that an undue regard to the opinions of others may prove a snare to minds inaccessible to every other mode of attack. In St. Paul we recognise with pleasure the first protestant of the church of Christ.

Hitherto we have followed the records of the inspired penmen, but we must now be led by guides of inferior authority; our history will, therefore, be as brief as it is precarious. Where St. Peter continued to exercise his ministry we cannot pretend to determine. The pretensions of the church of Rome to the long continued services of this apostle are generally discredited by protestant writers. Nor are we disposed to give more credit to Eusebius, when, on the authority of Metaphrastus, he affirmed that St. Peter preached in Britain. From the circumstance of his being distinguished as the apostle of the circumcision, we incline to think that Judea, Samaria, Syria, together with Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bythinia (to the Jewish strangers of which countries his epistles are addressed) were the principal scenes of his ministry. In the latter part of his life, he appears to have spent some time at Rome, and there he received the honour of martyrdom. His contest with Simon Magus in that city we pass over in silence, as a pious fraud of later times, which can add nothing to the solid greatness of our apostle's character.

A champion like Peter, who fought in the hottest front of the battle, could not but draw upon himself the fury of his enemies. Orders were issued to apprehend the apostles; and St. Ambrose tells us that by the pressing solicitations of the church, he was persuaded to look for some secure retreat, and was passing through the gates of Rome, when he met the venerable form of his Master, who told him he was going to Rome, 'to be crucified a second time.' This vision St. Peter is said to have considered as a reproof of his cowardice, and returning again into the city, was apprehended, and thrown with St. Paul into the Mamertine prison. Here he continued eight or nine months, preaching to the prisoners, and such as resorted to him; and during his imprisonment he is supposed to have written his second epistle, in which he speaks of his martyrdom as nigh at hand. On the return of Nero from Acaiah, he was ordered for execution, and expired on the cross on the top of the Vatican Mount. If he was crucified with his head downward, we attribute it to the contempt and rage of his persecutors, rather than to his own desire, as the reason assigned for so extraordinary a request, namely, that he was unworthy to suffer in the same posture as his Lord, appears too weak for the mature wisdom of the aged apostle.

Such was the glorious death by which St. Peter finished the career of his illustrious labours. From the beginning to the end of it, he was distinguished by his Master's confidence, and the marked deference of his brother apostles. Both these circumstances indicate some personal superiority in St. Peter, which chiefly consisted, however, in the boldness and simplicity of his character, the strength of his faith, and the ardour of his love and zeal. His faults were the result of the same natural constitution of mind to which we ascribe his peculiar excellencies. The first were corrected, and the last improved, as he grew in knowledge and in grace. His epistles have all the features of a bold and vigorous mind. The fire of his imagination is mellowed by time; and, with all the richness of mature wisdom and piety, he lays open a heart full of affection and solicitude for the welfare of the flock. But we lay down our pen, impressed with a sense that it is not for men of our stature to appreciate his merits, and that his praise as well as his reward, is not of man but of God.

RELIGIOUS AND MORAL DISCUSSIONS.

OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIANITY, ANSWERED.

Mr. Editor,

The history of the learned, able, and accurate Mosheim, published in this city, has, no doubt, been perused, with pleasure and edification, by many of your readers. Judging, however, from what has come to my knowledge, that work, so subservient to the cause of truth and religion, may, it is feared, have, in some instances, weakened the faith of feeble minds. This unhappy effect has resulted, not from any fault in the historian, but from a full and candid display of the truth.

Mosheim has, without concealment or palliation, exposed to view that corrupt and deplorable state in which the christian church existed for many centuries. His faithfulness as an historian should not be censured, but applauded. The truth ought to be told, and the event left with the great Head of the church. But still it may justly be feared, that weak and uninformed minds have, from the accounts given of the wicked lives of the clergy, and the general prevalence of vice among professors, been led to question the truth of christianity. My object is to show, that the suspicions secretly entertained, or openly avowed, by such minds, are unreasonable and unfounded.

The state of the church, during the period contemplated, was deplorable indeed. The ignorance, laziness, luxury, ambition, and wickedness of the clergy were almost incredible; and the vices and crimes of all other ranks of people abounded in proportion to those of their spiritual teachers. From this state of things in the church what conclusion shall we draw? Shall we make one derogatory to the honour and divine authority of christianity? Shall we say that a religion whose professors are so vicious and abandoned cannot claim a heavenly origin? By no means. While we weep over this period of the church, and mourn that men calling themselves by the sacred name of Christ, should by their wicked lives so belie their profession, and open the mouths of blasphemers, we are confident that no real dishonour attaches itself to our holy religion. The moral influence is a good criterion by which to judge of any religion. But to ascertain this you must not only look at the lives of its professors, but contemplate the natural tendency of its doctrines and precepts. If the tendency, as well as the lives of its professors, be immoral, you may at once reject its claims to divinity. But if their wickedness be unauthorized

by its precepts, and can find no countenance from its doctrines, an unfavourable conclusion cannot with justice be drawn. The dishonour is apparent not real. Apply this rule to the christian religion. Can you discover any immoral tendency either in its doctrines or in its precepts? Show the precept that allows, the doctrine that countenances ambition, luxury, avarice, sensuality, pride, uncleanness, injustice, spiritual tyranny, or any vice. Search the scriptures, and you will find that the christian system, in all its parts, is eminently calculated to promote justice, equity, humility, gentleness, meekness, benevolence, and every other virtue conducive to the happiness of society. The religion of Jesus, then, is not responsible for the crimes of its professors.

But, it may be asked, can we believe that a religion coming from God should have so little influence as christianity had in that period, in forming the manners and conduct of men? Admit, that the corruptions of the christian church become an insuperable objection to its divine authority. What is the consequence of pursuing the principle on which this conclusion is grounded? Then, natural religion cannot be from God; for these men were the subjects of this as well as of revealed religion. Then, reason cannot be from God; for these men were rational creatures as well as professors of religion. The force of such conclusions cannot be evaded by saying, that the perversion of reason, and the corruption of natural religion, were owing to the belief of christianity. This is giving up the principle from which objections are derived against christianity; for it is grounded on the supposition, that a gift or religion coming from God cannot be abused. Now, if you allow that reason and natural religion may be abused, and thence infer that the abuse of them makes not against their divine origin, you ought, *in justice*, to allow that revealed religion may be abused, and that the abuse *of it* cannot make against its claims to divine authority. But if you will insist, that the corrupt lives of its professors prove that it cannot be from God; then, to be consistent with yourselves, you should, on the very same principle, maintain, that natural religion and reason cannot be from God; because every professor of christianity is, and must be, a subject of reason and natural religion, and, therefore, they are responsible for his conduct as much as christianity. Revealed religion makes no opposition either to reason or to natural religion. On the contrary, it supposes man to be a rational creature, addresses him as such, and maintains, that enlightened reason must approve of all its doctrines and precepts when rightly understood: and it, moreover, incorporates the whole of natural religion with

itself, and professes to do no more than supply the deficiency of natural religion, to answer the necessities and new relations of mankind occasioned by sin. And in the controversy between christians and deists, the dispute is, not whether man be a rational creature, and natural religion divine; but whether reason and natural religion be of themselves sufficient to conduct sinners to eternal life. Deists maintain the affirmative; christians support the negative, and say that natural religion, being given to man in a state of innocence, made no provision for his recovery from sin, because it contemplated him as an upright creature; and that a new relation being induced by his apostacy from God, a new or revealed religion became necessary; which, contemplating all the relations of man, might make effectual provision for all his necessities.

You see, then, whither your principle will carry you; that it will extinguish all religion, and prove that reason is not a gift from God. Nay, it will further evince, that mankind can be neither the subjects of his moral government, nor the creatures of his almighty power. For, can we believe that a race so wicked, vile, and depraved have derived their existence from a Being so holy, or live under his government which, like himself, must be holy? This length, I presume, you are not prepared, nor willing, to go: and I have pursued the principle in all its just consequences to their full extent, to open your eyes upon that dreadful precipice to which it leads, and convince you that it is false and deceitful.

The conclusion which should be drawn from the corruptions of the christian church, is, that mankind are so depraved that they will abuse every gift of God; that even the influence of revealed religion, unattended with a divine power on the heart, is not sufficient to restrain the corruptions of men and make them virtuous and pious; and that only, when accompanied by the all-conquering energy of the Holy Spirit, can the preaching of the gospel answer its great design. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."

It may be further observed, that reason is more responsible for the vices of this dark period, than christianity; for it is a fact, that not only the common people, but the clergy were ignorant of the doctrines and precepts of the christian system. Very few of the teachers of religion were able to read; and those who were, instead of studying the scriptures, and deriving their ideas from this pure fountain, studied the writings of Aristotle, and made, not Jesus Christ, but this heathen, lord of their

faith. So that the church, by neglecting the Holy Scriptures, was brought to a level with those who have never enjoyed their light; and the corruptions and vices of its members, as they were the natural consequence, were also a just punishment of their chusing darkness rather than light.

The ignorance and wickedness of the christian church during the dark ages, so far from being an argument against the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, form a very strong one in favour of it. This deplorable state of things was a fulfilment of scripture prophecy. That it was clearly and distinctly foretold, is evident from the following quotations from the writings of St. Paul: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." 1 Tim. iv. 1—3. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own-selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." 2 Tim. iii. 1—5. "Let no man deceive you by any means; for *that day shall not come* except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way; and then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming; *even him* whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth,

but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thes. ii. 3—12. Here you see, that the corruptions of the christian church were foretold in a manner plain, distinct, and accurate; so that no candid person can, after comparing the events with the prophecy, deny that the one is a manifest fulfilment of the other. And is not such an accomplishment of prophecy a strong and convincing evidence of the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures? Who but the omniscient God could have foreseen and predicted an event so strange as the rise and progress of the papal empire, and the vile and abominable lives of men professing the pure and holy religion of Jesus?

Instead, therefore, of being shaken in your belief of christianity by the corruptions of the church in the period contemplated, you should be established in it; and you should also be convinced of the necessity of divine influence to restrain the wickedness of human nature, and to render the preaching of the gospel successful in turning men from sin to holiness.

Y.

A DISSERTATION

ON THE FOLLOWING PASSAGES, TAKEN IN A CONTRASTED VIEW.

GENESIS ii. 17, *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof,* THOU SHALT SURELY DIE.

CHAPTER iii. v. 4, *And the serpent said unto the woman,* YE SHALL NOT SURELY DIE.

IT being the object of every believer to arrive at the truth, no advantage can arise from distorting the evident import of scripture, by putting the constructions of our own fancies on the terms used, or by displaying our ingenuity in explaining away the meaning of words. As the creatures of God, and as accountable to him for our opinions and actions, we are concerned to make his word, in all cases, the standard of faith. Whatever be our wishes and feelings, there is but one path marked out, in which we may safely proceed; and that is, to learn the mind of God as expressed in the revelation which he hath put into our hands.

At an early period of the world we find, that different and contradictory sentiments have been advanced on religious subjects. Laying aside all prejudice and prepossession, we do honour to ourselves, and to the truth, by searching after the doctrine of infallible wisdom and unerring rectitude. In the passages before us, we find a most express and pointed contrariety. This contrariety is

on a serious and fundamental article; and has given rise to much disquietude and altercation in the christian world. Let us examine, on which side lies the truth, and how we are to regulate our belief.

Two things the writer will endeavour to keep in view.

1st, The import of the threatening given; or, to see what is comprehended in the curse denounced.

2d, To examine into the probability respecting the substantial correctness of the denial which follows.

We, then, first inquire into the import of the threatening expressed in these words "*In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.*" This being the language of God himself, we must allow, that he has a right to comment on it in his own way; and, by subsequent words and acts, to convey to us, his real meaning. This meaning, whatever it may be, has not varied in the revolutions of time, or with the progress of events. "God is of one mind, and who can turn him?" The evidence he gives, in an actual illustration of his designs, is the truest exposition of the language he has adopted. If we follow the analogy of God's works, and trace the operations of his hand, which perfectly coincide with the sentiments he advances, we shall find that he hath uniformly and very intelligibly explained himself. His threatening to our first parents was couched in the following terms: "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." If this meant no more than temporal death, or the death of the body, then surely every man, who goes down to the grave receives the full and appropriate punishment of his sins, according to the design of the offended party, expressed in his denunciation. In this case there would be no room, and no occasion, for a Saviour; the punishment of sin being inflicted on the offender himself; and so, no transfer to be made either of guilt or suffering. Adam, no doubt, understood the threatening and knew what was included by it; and if temporal death were all, then the curse has never been removed from him or any of his posterity. In due time it comes upon all, even the best of men, and upon all alike. But the reason and innate sense of mankind unite with scripture to carry the idea much further, and to stamp a more solemn importance on the subject.

It is evident, beyond all controversy, that there is some moral disorder on the human mind, and that men are corrupt in their views, exercises and desires. Hence, a consciousness of guilt disturbs the quiet of their breasts, and fills them with agitation and fear. This disordered state of the mind is, in scripture, denominated

death. This, by theologians, is termed a *spiritual death;* and consists in the alienation of the affections from God, a loss of his moral image, and an insensibility to every thing divine, spiritual and holy. By the apostle it is denominated being " dead in trespasses and sins." This death is the immediate consequence of disobedience, and supposses the demolition of all holy principle within. The reality of this state is confirmed by the representations given of the emancipation from it, effected by the grace and power of God. Persons are said to be " *born again, created anew,* and raised from the dead."

Here is exhibited a woeful picture of human depravity, and a lively view of human wretchedness. The moral condition here supposed is applicable to all who are partners in the guilt of Adam; and it may be one thing intended in the prediction or threatening with which our first ancestor was addressed in the prohibitory and menacing words of God. But I shall extend the idea still further, because I suppose there is more comprehended in the curse. An idea has obtained in the world, that there is something to be apprehended by the sinner as the consequence of his sins in another state. Hence men are perpetually agitated with fears when they are in the near views of death. Few get above these fears, or obtain an exemption from them; but generally they bespeak both a consciousness of guilt, and an apprehension of evil. These ideas have obtained, in a greater or less degree, even where revelation has never been known, and they exist, at times, in the breasts of the most hardened and stupid. So that every man carries within him both an evidence of his depravity and of his liability to punishment. Anxious forebodings of approaching evil are no strangers to the human mind, but often disturb the peace and harrow up the consciences of mortals. The representations of scripture on this subject do but accord with the sentiments of human nature, when no partial or interested feelings sway the decision.

But should there be any doubt as to the degree or extent of the evil threatened, the language of God's word is full and explicit on the subject.

The doctrine of future punishments and of the wrath to come, of everlasting destruction and the torments of hell, is repeatedly and plainly brought up to view. Nor is it to be supposed, that subsequent writers have enlarged upon the plan stated by Moses in his history of the fall and punishment of man. Greater light has been communicated, but no new ideas advanced, as to the real substance of the evil threatened. As much was comprehended in the original curse as in all the subsequent denunciations with

which the word of God abounds. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," is an expression which conveys as full an idea of future and endless suffering as when it is said, "he that believeth not shall be damned;" or, "these shall go away into everlasting punishment;" and again, "who shall be punished with everlasting destruction." All these are expressions of synonymous import, conveying to us, very plainly, the notion of eternal death. This evil consists in the seclusion of the soul from God, from heaven, from holiness, and from all enjoyment. It supposes the continuance and perpetual augmentation of spiritual death; and is the consummation of all evil which can be endured both in soul and body. Our Saviour has contrasted the future condition of the righteous and the wicked, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and observed, in regard to the latter, "and it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom," denoting his exaltation to heaven and happiness. As a counterpart to this, and to show the amazing difference in the future condition of men, it is added, "the rich man also died and was buried; and in hell, (observe the expression) *in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torment.*" This tormented condition of the voluptuous worldling is represented as being subsequent to his death, or to his departure out of this world. And there being no intimation, that this torment will cease; but, on the contrary, the most positive assurances, that it will continue without mitigation or relief, we are constrained to disavow the scriptures of truth, or subscribe to the doctrine of interminable sufferings. And if we are candid enough to admit, that the writers in the word of God have accorded in their sentiments on this subject, we must allow, that the original curse doomed men to this state, and certified all this amazing and endless suffering. Into the substance of the evil threatened we gather then, an idea of spiritual, temporal, and eternal death. From the effects of this curse, whatever it might mean, it was evidently the design of the seducing serpent to give our first parents assurance of complete security. He meets the suggestion of the great Jehovah in its most pointed and unequivocal form, and declares it to be false. "Ye shall not surely die," was a flat denial of what God had asserted. We are, therefore, concerned to see what dependence is to be placed on the declaration here made. Our second proposition will therefore now, of course, occupy our attention: which was,

2ndly, To examine the probability respecting the substantial correctness of the serpent's contradiction of the Most High. Is it certain, or is it even probable, that reliance may safely be placed

on the assertion uttered by the arch-deceiver? It is worthy of remark, that if the serpent is correct, men may dismiss all their uneasiness on account of sin, and be no longer perplexed with fearful apprehensions respecting a future state of punishment. But if there be no foundation for the assurance given, and it turns out to be an arrogant and audacious falsehood, then it is hazardous in the extreme to put any confidence in it, or to permit it to have the least influence on the mind or conduct. To assist in determining this matter, let us advert, for a few moments, to the character of him from whom proceeds this bold and confident assertion.

It contributes not a little to the credibility of any testimony to learn, that the person testifying is of good repute, and that on his character there is no stain. If any charge or suspicion of falsehood lies against him, or if he has been convicted of an intentional violation of the truth, his assertion however peremptorily or solemnly made, has but little influence in regulating our opinion. Accordingly, it has ever been deemed a matter of consequence, in courts of law and equity, to inquire into the credibility of witnesses, and learn their general character for truth and veracity. If any thing material can be alleged which affects the credibility of a witness his testimony is rejected as of no avail. This is a common, a rational, and an approved line of procedure among men, in the investigation of secular concerns. Will any deny the propriety of applying the same rule to an inquiry into spiritual concerns?

Let us act thus rationally in the case we have under consideration. The being who speaks is, in the passage before us, denominated "the serpent." This, no one will doubt, refers to the great adversary of God and man, who is elsewhere termed the *devil* and *Satan*. To invalidate his testimony it is proper to consider, that he was the enemy of God, and disposed, if possible, to destroy or mar his works: he was also the enemy of all good, and disposed to ruin the happiness of others. Malice against God, and envy against man, would prompt him to form and execute the most diabolical purposes. Having lost heaven and happiness himself, he was solicitous to draw others into the same snare, and to make them as unhappy and wretched as himself.

With such propensities and exercises, view him approaching our first parents, fraught with the wiles of a subtle and malevolent foe. Finding the woman alone, and judging it a favourable season to commence his attack, hear him accost her with all the craft and softness which ingenuity affords: "Yea, hath God

said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Then, by suggesting a query which seemed to denote astonishment in the inquirer, he began to stagger her faith in the kindness of her Maker. After assuring the serpent, that this was indeed the fact, that God had laid them under such a prohibition, and annexed the penalty of death to their disobedience, the woman is addressed in the following more bold and decisive terms: "*Ye shall not surely die.*" One would have thought, that the woman must have suspected some design in this direct and unqualified contradiction of God. The words of the threatening were positive. The language in which the serpent retorts is equally plain and decisive. One stands in direct opposition to the other.

Now, is this enemy of God and man, who is rationally suspected of some evil design, entitled to any credit? Does not the strength of his assertion lose its principal force, when we consider the light in which he is to be viewed? His character is exhibited in a very unfavourable light in the word of God. If we put any confidence in the declarations of the Saviour respecting him, we shall see at once, that nothing is more preposterous than to place confidence in his word. Besides the consideration, that he had strong inducements to falsify the truth, we are assured, by the mouth of him who cannot lie, that this very being who is termed by Moses "the serpent," is "a liar from the beginning; that he abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him; that he is a liar and the father of it." Admitting the justness of this statement, we can need no further testimony to prove, that the author of the doctrine which thus charges the lie upon God, is entitled to no manner of confidence, and that, on every principle of fair and equitable decision, his declaration is to be rejected. From this quarter, therefore, we gather nothing to render it even probable, that there was the least foundation for the assertion of the serpent.

But, let us turn our thoughts to the character of the Being opposed, and consider that the negative assurance given is in direct contradiction of the highest possible authority. God had a little before asserted, that death should be the consequence of disobedience. We are bound, in reason, and in duty, to believe this assertion, till we have some equal or superior authority for withholding our belief. Till some one comes, vested with sufficient authority from God himself, or who can lay claim to a higher measure of credibility, we are not at liberty to distrust, for a moment, the correctness of what God has stated to us. The character of God is such as to carry him above the suspicion of any attempt

or design to deceive his creatures. There is not the shadow of evidence, that he ever uttered a falsehood. The scriptures assure us, that he is "a God of truth and without iniquity;" and it is said to be impossible for him to lie. When, therefore, an unauthorised and seducing enemy comes and undertakes to contradict what God has certified, to say the least, we should be extremely cautious how we listen to his assertions or admit his testimony.

The thought is inadmissible, that God could, through mistake, express himself differently from what he intended. His meaning was originally conveyed, and it has not varied to suit the humours of depraved men.

The circumstances in this case, relative to the characters of the parties concerned, are glaring with respect to the absurdity of being any way swayed in our faith by such impudent effrontery as marks the language of the serpent. Since God was never convicted of advancing a false position, and since he has not, in the least degree, forfeited his claim to confidence, the conclusion irresistibly follows, that his words are to be taken for truth, notwithstanding a thousand opposers should a thousand times affirm the contrary. We further observe, that there is nothing in the nature and circumstances of the case which admits the supposition, that the threatening has in it no significancy or truth. Could any thing new be stated, showing that God had altered his purpose, or that he was not determined to treat sin in the manner he had promised, this would be something to urge in vindication of a contrary statement. But nothing of this kind is even pretended. The adversary first jeers at the prohibition, and then flatly denies the truth of the threatening with which it stands connected. Now, what circumstance can be alleged which shall render it probable, or bring it within the compass of credibility, that God had given a misrepresentation or uttered an untruth?

Will you say, that the threatening was too severe, and therefore could not be executed by a God of justice and benevolence? Or, will you say, that the serpent knew better than God himself what was the design of man's Creator, and what would, in fact, take place? Either of these suppositions is fraught with absurdity and impiety. The reason stated by the adversary, in his temptation, is so far from favouring the case, or rendering probable what he affirmed, that it directly contributed to prove the contrary. "For," says he, "God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil." If this would be the effect, it is not to be doubted that God, who knew the whole operation, meant to guard against

it, and continue man on a footing more becoming the station he held in the scale of being. And if, to court the pride, the ambition, and the aspiring views of creatures was placing them, as the adversary insinuates, on a footing more acceptable to their Maker, and more deserving of his notice, then the right plan is suggested by the serpent. But if, to make them uneasy with their present condition; to fill them with the vainest hopes, and inflame them with the most impious desires was calculated to destroy them, and the system of God, then we have before us a specimen of that diabolical art, which adopts the most flattering, and, at the same time, the most false and preposterous arguments. In the case stated in the connected passage, the gratification of a sinful desire is urged as a reason for the commission of a sinful act; and the exaltation of the creature, even to the degree of a deified state, is pleaded as a motive for sacrificing the truth and disobeying the command of the most high God. I see nothing here, which is not at once, impious, extravagant, and abominable. No circumstance is presented to view, in this case, which does not exhibit proof, that the whole was applied to the basest and vilest purposes; and that all was calculated and designed to alienate the affections of the creature from his Creator, and to further the object of a most audacious and blasphemous falsehood. This being the case, we see on what ground rests the credibility of the assurance given by the serpent. Neither the character of him who confronts the authority of God; nor the character of the Being opposed; nor any other condition or circumstance attending the case, contributes, in the least, to render probable the negative assertion which was made. It is, therefore, exhibited as the first, the greatest, and the most pernicious of all lies. It is the origin of all falsehood in this world, and is from him who is emphatically "a liar from the beginning." We are, of consequence, emboldened to set aside his declaration, and to exhibit the truth of God as most directly and materially concerned in fulfilling his threatening. "Ye shall surely die," is as true now, in reference to us and all other offenders, as when first uttered and applied to the case of Adam and Eve. The conclusion of the whole matter, then, is this, that God had threatened the penalty of death, in its fullest and most extensive sense, to the violators of his law; and that this threatening remains in full force, having never been repealed or done away. Thus it stands in the book of Genesis, and the account is not reversed by any counter-statement throughout the Holy Bible. Whoso eateth the fruit of disobedience, must expect the awful penalty which God's justice demands.

In reflecting on the foregoing remarks we can hardly fail to notice the daring presumption, and arrogant impiety, to which sin prompts and conducts its votaries.

The conduct of the adversary, in opposing and contradicting the God of heaven, shows to what heights of audacious insult and bold effrontery sin will carry those in whom it reigns. The subject also, in the view which we have taken of it, helps us to discover the ground on which infidels in the word of God, and opposers of his truth and government, rest their hopes of deliverance from future evil. By infidels, we do not here intend merely deists, those who wholly reject the authority of divine revelation, but a certain class of unbelievers who reject only a part, and deny what does not accord with their wishes and hopes. Of this class are those, who subscribe to the doctrine promulgated by the enemy of God and man, and who hold, that there will be either no infliction of evil upon the impenitent, or such as will not amount to that idea of death which we have given above.

Precarious and fallacious is the basis of their hopes. They have no better, nor a more ancient, support for their opinion than the declaration of the arch-deceiver; and this declaration confronting the most positive assurance of Him whose word is truth. Should it be said, that the promise of God, afterwards made, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, is the foundation of such comforting hope with the wicked; then it will appear, that this promise is only a repetition of what had before been advanced by the enemy of all good; and so a confirmation, or, as it were, a second declaration of the doctrine taught by the serpent in his temptation previous to the fall of man. On this ground we must look back to the father of lies as the inventor and first propagator of this sentiment. In this view, that promise of God to our first parents, which is an epitome of the whole gospel, becomes synonymous with the tempter's denial of his truth. This construction, not only admits the strange idea, that God seconded and confirmed what his adversary had advanced in opposition to him; but it exhibits him in the preposterous condition of one contradicting and opposing himself. It is not, I think, an uncharitable, but a fair and an equitable suggestion, grounded on a scriptural view of the case, that the doctrine of universal and promiscuous salvation radically springs from the first error broached in the garden of Eden, and, with serpentine adroitness, infused into the mind of our too credulous mother Eve. Those modifications of this doctrine, which to save appearances, and make it more plausibly consonant with the representations of scripture, admit

of a partial and temporary punishment are, but in effect, the the same, and originate from the same source. They do not rest on the authority of God's word, but on the contradictory assertion of his adversary. Though many things are said favourable to the plan of redeeming mercy, showing that God has designs of love towards our apostate race, and that he intends to effect the recovery of some, even of a vast multitude, so as to magnify the riches of his grace, yet it is no where affirmed, definitively, that he hath determined to save all.

When it is said, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," it is not added that the world through him might be saved, but that "whosoever *believeth on him* should not perish but have eternal life." And it is expressly affirmed, in opposition to the sentiments of unbelievers and universalists, "he that believeth not, shall be damned." Again, the Saviour declares, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall *die in your sins*." We read also of some who shall be cast into hell fire; into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; and into the fire which shall never be quenched. Also of some who shall go away into *everlasting punishment;* who shall be *tormented for ever and ever;* and who shall be punished with *everlasting* destruction, &c. These expressions seem not to accord with the idea of an indiscriminate and universal salvation; but they rather coincide with the original declaration of God, when he uttered the first minatory sentence which ever proceeded from his holy lips; and, they stand in opposition to that false, that pernicious, that enchanting, but that deadly sentiment promulgated by the seducing serpent. We should, then, examine well before we listen to the alluring temptation of the adversary, and swallow the sweet, but poisonous bait of unbelief. There is no better authority on which to rest our hopes of salvation, while in our sins, than the word of an unprincipled and God-defying rebel. On such authority we should not rely in the most indifferent worldly concern; but to prove the most unimportant declaration which affected our temporal interest, we should require better testimony.

When considering the character of the Being denouncing a curse, and the character of him who demurs to the declaration, and denies the assertion; when considering also the case to be so circumstanced, as to admit no rational ground of hesitation, can it be less than madness to break over all the established rules of evidence, and to believe in opposition to the most direct, abundant, and unequivocal testimony? Shall we run away from the truth, and hunt up excuses for hiding ourselves from the

presence of the Lord God, among the trees of deception? If so, the voice of the Lord God will reach our vain retreat, and summon us from our refuge of lies. The question is, and a very solemn and interesting question, whether we will believe God or the serpent?—whether we will hearken to the voice of truth, or bow to the sceptre of falsehood?—or whether we will obey the wholesome counsel of heaven, or impetuously croud on in the road to hell? If we have no better plea to make than this, "the serpent beguiled me," we have need to be in the utmost solicitude about the issue. It is, indeed, time to consider of this matter. To trifle or delay, is both hazardous and criminal. We are all equally concerned. I have no interest to promote by pleading the cause of error; and I would not for a world misguide any in this momentous affair. Sooner or later we must decide whether God is to be believed, or the welfare of our souls put to the hazard of having substantiated the denial of his truth.

If any imagine he will save them in their sins, they are on untenable ground. Their arrival at heaven depends on being washed in the laver of regeneration, and being under "*the renewing of the Holy Ghost.*" The only passage to that world of blessedness is "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." It is an everlasting and glorious truth, that "grace reigns *through righteousness*, unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." If universalists will prove, that this is the genuine operation in every case; and that all are thus made holy and righteous, we will hold no further controversy with them. But till they rid heaven of unholy beings, and bar the regions of the blessed against impenitent and ungodly souls, we must oppose their sentiments, we must reject their system. While we dissent from their doctrine as opening wide the floodgates of impiety, and tearing down the barriers between sin and holiness, we rejoice in the freeness and richness of divine grace. We feel authorized with the utmost sincerity and earnestness to offer salvation to all. While the voice from heaven proclaims, "ye shall surely die," and the language from hell declares "ye shall not surely die;" we reach forth, in this mighty conflict of opinion and assertion, the tenders of divine mercy in that copious and enrapturing invitation of the Saviour: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

OF ANGELS. No. II.

We shall add one passage of scripture more to show, that it is probable that angels have the superintendence of nations and empires. It is the following: "And I turned, and lift up mine eyes, and looked, and behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains: and the mountains *were* mountains of brass. In the first chariot *were* red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; and in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses. Then I answered, and said unto the angel that talked with me, What *are* these my lord? And the angel answered, and said unto me, These *are* the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth. The black horses which *are* therein go forth into the north country; and the white go forth after them; and the grisled go forth toward the south country. And the bay went forth, and sought to go, that they might walk to and fro through the earth; and he said, Get ye hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth." Zech. vi. 1—7. Grotius supposes, that the four chariots drawn by different coloured horses, in this highly figurative passage, denote the Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman empires, and that by "the four spirits of the heavens" we are to understand the four angels of God who presided over them. Other commentators think, that the whole passage is merely an emblematic representation of the agency of angels in the administration of Providence.

Families as well as *nations* are put under the protection of angels. Through their care, families remain in safety. This was "the hedge" which secured Job's children and substance, while they remained in prosperity. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." In various ways, unknown to us, they promote our welfare.

Angels frequent *worshipping assemblies*. The apostle Paul exhorts the Corinthians to be decent in their conduct, in public assemblies, "*because of the angels*," whose presence ought to inspire respectful attention. Solomon recommends similar conduct from the same principle: "Keep thy feet, when thou goest to the house of God; neither say thou before *the Angel* that it was an error." Angels, it appears, take great notice of worshipping assemblies, and though "the eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good," yet it may be the employment of angels to report in the court of heaven the behaviour, both good and bad, of those who compose the worshipping assemblies which they visit.

Individuals have been attended by these invisible guardians. "It is *his Angel*," exclaimed the apostles, when assured that Peter was at the door, whom they believed to be in close confinement. "The angel who redeemed me from all evil," said Jacob, with his hands placed on the heads of Joseph's sons, "bless the lads." When Elisha was exposed to his enemies, his servant became very uneasy, until, in answer to the prophet's prayer, his eyes were opened, and he discovered the mountain where they stood, filled with horses of fire, and chariots of fire. Angels, no doubt, assumed that appearance, for the protection of his master. "Despise not little children," was our Lord's command; "for I say unto you, that in heaven *their angels* do *always* behold the face of my father which is in heaven." Infants and children are put under the charge of angels, who cheerfully execute that charge with the most vigilant attention.* Angels conveyed Lazarus at his death to Abraham's bosom. They are indeed "ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation." The only question is, whether each individual has a particular attendant angel. It is most likely that angels relieve one another, in this service, and at intervals return to heaven, to give an account of their respective charges. Socrates, heathen as he was, believed himself attended by a guardian spirit, to whose suggestions and care he expressed great obligations. The same belief, indeed, was common to many eminent persons among the pagan nations. The justice of this opinion will receive much confirmation, by a careful perusal of the Holy Scriptures.

Angels appear to be the principal agents whom God is pleased to employ in the administration of his providence. They drove Adam out of Paradise, as has already been hinted, and guarded the entrance to the tree of life; they destroyed the first-born in Egypt, and the numerous army of Sennacherib; they smote the Jews, in David's day, with pestilence, and Herod, in the apostles' days, with an incurable disease; they attended God when he gave his law to Israel, and probably produced the sounds and appearances, which impressed consternation and terror upon every mind; they protected Daniel in the den of lions, and opened the doors of the prison in which the apostles of our Lord were con-

* *Reflection by a Parent on the death of his Child.*

Some messenger of God my door has pass'd'
From earth returning, saw the beauteous flow'r,
Transported, gather'd it, and in his hand
Bore it to heaven, rejoicing.

fined. Happy for us, that, in executing their office, they are generally invisible. The appearance is terrible to man invested with flesh and blood;* but their existence and services are expressly revealed, and the experience of the righteous confirms the consolatory truth.

Though the angels "excel in strength," and are the highest order of created intelligences, they cheerfully marshal themselves under Christ as their head.† At his command Gabriel flies, and Michael executes all his pleasure. The innumerable company execute his orders in every part of his vast dominion, and

* It is a strong proof of the depravity of man, and of his deep consciousness of guilt, that whenever any extraordinary appearance leads him to believe that a messenger is sent to him from the invisible world, he is filled with *fear* and not with *joy*, he expects *vengeance*, and not *kindness*. This appears not to have been the case before the fall, but it has been so ever since. When our Saviour walked on the sea to go to his disciples, they thought it was a spirit, and "cried out for fear." At the sepulchre of the risen Saviour, the angels had to sooth the apprehensions of the pious women with "fear not ye." A few years since, when Blanchard ascended in his balloon from Philadelphia, he caused great consternation among the ignorant people a few miles from the city, where he descended to the earth. They did not suppose he was *a good angel*, coming to them on "an errand of mercy." They fully believed that he was *the devil* come to do them mischief; and it was not till after many assurances to the contrary, vociferated to the astonished beholders at a distance, that the æronaut could prevail on any one to approach, and afford him the assistance which he needed.

† Religious worship is a service due to God alone. Hence angels, who are only the creatures of God, are not the proper objects of worship, and they are represented in scripture, as refusing it in the most peremtory manner, and as being filled with a kind of holy abhorrence at the thought that it should be offered to them. "And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And, when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." Rev. xxii. 8, 9. In connexion with this, let it be remembered, that the Saviour, more than once, while on earth, received religious worship, and never disapproved nor forbad it; and is, moreover, represented as the object of worship, after his ascension, by the apostles, and by the first martyr Stephen. Nay, let it be remembered, that the *angels* themselves, and by the express command of God, are bound to worship him; for "when he bringeth his first begotten into the world he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him." Heb. i. 6. Let this be remembered, and then say if the conclusion is not absolutely unavoidable, that Christ is God.

shall attend him, in full assembly, at the great day, to carry into full effect his designs, with respect both to the righteous and to the wicked. Recognise, in this glorious person, *Immanuel* "*God with us.*" Beware of his displeasure; obey his voice; provoke him not; for he will not pardon his irreclaimable enemies. The unbelieving, and disobedient, if they retain this character, are excluded from hope. They arm against themselves a power, which can raise up evil to torment them in their basket and in their store; in their bodies, and in their minds; in themselves, and in their families; in time, and in eternity. There is, therefore, a pressing necessity to comply with the psalmist's admontion: "Kiss the son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little; blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

Our Lord sends forth his angels to comfort, to direct, and to bless his people. It is not easy to ascertain the precise manner in which they perform their services. If thoughts suddenly arise, which determine our conduct at a critical moment, angels may suggest these thoughts; if unexpected deliverances come, when we had no hope, it may come by their instrumentality. Through their agency many may have been in a sort impelled to actions, whose effects have been universally useful; they have apprehended danger, when all was apparently calm; they have been urged to prepare for death, when external circumstances promised a continuance of life. We are intimately connected with the world of spirits. Had we the discernment of Elisha's servant, these celestials might often be seen hovering around us, observing our conduct, ready to execute the command of the King of heaven, in his designs either of judgment, or of mercy. What feelings ought this thought to inspire! Every opposing difficulty; every existing want; every threatening danger is known and observed. The christian may struggle with difficulty; may be oppressed with want; may be alarmed at the view of danger, but *his friends* are on his right hand, and on his left, with encouragement, assistance, and support. *Alone*, your circumstances are desperate; but *the angels* on your side, and the Saviour for your friend, those who are with you are more and stronger than they who are or can be against you. Acting in the presence of *angels* as well as of *men*, how holy and how dignified ought your actions to be! Why should trouble reach your hearts? Why so easily dismayed? Demean not yourselves before attending celestials. Let your worship be reverent, and your conduct heavenly. In patience possess your souls. Wisdom's ways are pleasantness, and her paths

peace. Go on your way rejoicing. "There shall no evil befal thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." God "shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."

Do the most exalted angels minister to the meanest of the human race, performing, for their benefit, many kind offices? Nay, did the Lord of angels himself come into our world, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many? And can any be so dull as not to observe that doing good to one another is conduct *heavenly* and *magnanimous?* Men are never so well employed as when they lay themselves out to be useful, and to promote the welfare of each other. This is the employment of angels. This was the employment of the Lord of angels himself, when on earth. In such employment men are workers together with God. What conduct can give such satisfaction, or what conduct can render any so truly *great?* This is the character, in some measure, of all who are renewed in the spirit of their minds. They shall certainly reach the heavenly state, for, in disposition and conduct, they resemble celestials.

PHILOLOGOS.

[*To be continued.*]

EXTRACT OF A LETTER.

THE sentiments contained in the following short extract, will afford consolation to the soul which labours under a sense of its unworthiness, and is truly desirous of turning unto God, through Christ, for relief and pardon. The letter is from a clergyman in the interior of the country to his friend in this city.

"YOUR complaints of the state of your mind, your doubts and apprehensions of an interest in Christ, are by no means uncommon to God's people, and they should not, therefore, discourage you, as though a new thing had happened under the Sun. A sense of our unworthiness will always sink us in the dust, and it would into absolute despair, were not our hopes kept alive by the incomprehensible love of our Redeemer; for he is faithful, who hath called us, and who will also confirm us unto the end. The timidity of Christ's sheep is, perhaps, a characteristic of the whole flock, whilst the tenderness of the divine shepherd, who carries his lambs in his bosom, is sweetly exhibited by bidding them

not to fear, for it is the father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom.

"Our safety, my dear sir, does not depend on our frames, but on the faithfulness of God in Jesus Christ. This is our great mercy; for a believer, in the feelings of his heart, is one of the most variable creatures in the world; to-day joy brightens in his countenance, to-morrow he bursts into tears. Yet, however variable he may be, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, or rather this inscription, the Lord knoweth them that are his. Be thankful, therefore, if there be found in you any good thing toward the Lord God of Israel, for he will never desert you. He will graciously fan the spark, if it be no more, nor quit the merciful employment, until that spark, bursting into a flame, shall mingle with the fires of the seraphim."

MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS ON SAVING FAITH.

To possess clear, scriptural, consistent views of saving faith, is of the utmost importance. Our Saviour says, "this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." The consequences resulting to those who have this faith, as well as to those who shall remain without it, will be eternal, "He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall he damned." "What must I do to be saved?" is an interesting question. The answer given to it, by unerring wisdom, is, that we "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ;" and then the encouragement to a compliance with this direction immediately follows, which is a divine promise, that we "shall be saved."

Faith is a transaction of the mind and heart with God, about our eternal salvation. It is the exertion and desire of the soul, in coming to Christ. Thereby we cordially accept of Jesus, as our own Saviour, and give ourselves to him, to be his servants forever. For our imitation, and to their honour, it is recorded, 2 Cor. viii. 5, that the members of the churches of Macedonia "gave their ownselves to the Lord." A great diversity of metaphors is used, in the sacred writings, to illustrate the nature of this grace; such as, looking, coming, flying, &c.

I select three phrases, used in the scriptures, for the illustration of saving faith.

1. It is represented as the act of a soul, when receiving Christ. John i. 12. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." Wherever the gos-

pel is preached, there Jesus Christ and his salvation are freely offered to all, without exception, who hear it. Never was human benevolence so freely and sincerely exerted, to procure relief to indigence and distress, as is displayed by God in the plan of redemption. The great Jehovah has offered up his own Son as a sacrifice for sin, that through him, his rebel enemies may obtain pardon, peace, and glory! Having made this offering, and having pointed out the way to eternal happiness, it only remains for sinners to determine if they will accept of it; for it is only by receiving Christ, as he is offered to us in the gospel, that we can make him our own. By faith we live upon him, are nourished by him, and make use of him, for "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

2. Faith is represented, John vi. 53, as the act of "eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of the Son of man." Happy they, who hunger and thirst after righteousness; happy they, who feed upon the true bread which came down from heaven! However, as it is not the act of taking, or eating food, which nourisheth, but the food when taken; so it is not any intrinsic excellence in faith, viewed simply as our act, which saves us, but the merits and grace of Christ, applied, used, and digested by faith. By it, we plead the righteousness of Christ for our justification; and live upon his grace and fulness, for our sanctification. It opens a communication between heaven and earth. It conducts its possessor directly to the mediatorial treasures of him in whom it hath pleased the Father, that "all fulness should dwell;" of him "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." The conversation of the good man, is in heaven; to that country he trades. The road, between Christ's inexhaustible fulness and his own penury and emptiness, he travels with delight. He views Jesus Christ as the divinely appointed trustee of the covenant of grace; and, he comes to him, firmly believing that he possesses a boundless store of spiritual blessings, and that he possesses them for the express purpose of bestowing them upon every one who shall faithfully apply for them.

3. Faith, being the credit given to the divine testimony, is denominated "BELIEVING." Mat. xxi. 22. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

The Lord means as he speaks, and will do as he hath said. He is not a man that he should lie; for "righteousness is the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." We have an example in the third chapter of Jonah, which illustrates the nature of that credit which we are to give to God's declarations.

Directed by the Lord, Jonah cried, " Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." " So the people of Nineveh believed God;" that is, they gave full credit to God's message, delivered to them by Jonah. Another example occurs in Acts xxvii. After Paul had appealed to Cesar, and when he was on his voyage toward Rome, he and those who were with him were threatened with a watery grave. The Lord, who frequently appears for the deliverance of his own people, in the very article of extreme danger, sent his angel to communicate the following intelligence. " Fear not Paul, thou must be brought before Cesar, and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." Whereupon Paul animated his fellow-passengers, saying, " Be of good cheer, for I *believe* God, that it shall be, even as it was told me." God hath said it, I *believe* it. A filial, unsuspecting confidence in the Lord, as inviolably faithful and true, is signally pleasing to him, and infallibly secures our own eternal happiness. God has placed his word on a foundation which cannot be shaken, and on that we may safely fix our faith. His promises, confirmed by his oath, are exhibited to gain our unwavering reliance. " Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

" The gospel bears my spirit up;
" A faithful and unchanging God,
" Lays the foundation of my hope,
" In oaths, and promises, and blood."

Many doubts arise in the minds of anxious inquirers, with respect to their right, or warrant, to receive or believe in Christ; but how divinely encouraging are the means employed by the Lord to remove these doubts? " Buy wine and milk without money and without price. Come unto me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Christ is now riding through the evangelised world, in the chariot of the gospel, and as he passes along, he exhibits to all a pardon, purchased and sealed with his own blood. He, affectionately, asks, " O sinners, who among you desires a pardon?" Jesus the redeemer, came to save sinners—the very chief of sinners; and the invitations given, and the offers made, in the scriptures, authorise them to come to him for salvation, without any

discouragement. When you meet a beggar and offer to relieve his wants, his unworthiness, however great, does not preclude his right to receive the good which you tender him: neither, doth your unworthiness annihilate your right to believe in Christ, as your own particular Saviour, and to receive the offers and invitations made to you in his gospel. He promises, not only to accept you, when you shall come, but also to guide you through life, to support you in affliction and death, and to be your portion in eternity. His own words are, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;" which, according to Dr. Doddridge's emphatical translation, are, "I will not—I will not leave thee; I will never, never, never forsake thee."

Faith presupposes a conviction of our apostacy from God, and of our consequent depravity and wretchedness. For the whole need not a physician but the sick. Before coming to Christ, by faith, we must feel, that we are exposed to God's wrath, and to the curse of his broken law; that, by our personal exertions, we cannot answer the requirements of that law; and that "there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved."

The kind invitations, given in the gospel, are intended to embolden trembling inquirers to fly for safety to the true city of refuge, and also to leave impenitent sinners without excuse. But, alas! the tender proposals of salvation, which are made to us in the gospel, will increase our guilt and inflame our misery, unless we accept them. O careless sinner! by your unbelief you make God a liar. Undervaluing the gospel is a more heinous crime than the violation of the law; for, in the gospel, God is making his last effort to reclaim you, and, therefore, if you continue to disregard it, there remains no more sacrifice for your sin. "If," saith Christ, "I had not come and spoken unto you, you had not had sin, but now you have no cloak for your sin." What will it avail you, that Christ hath bled to death on the cross, unless you come to him? Will a proclamation of pardon, issued to rebels, from competent authority, profit them, unless they comply with the terms on which the indemnity is offered? Will wealth proffered to an indigent man enrich him, if he do not accept it? Will a suitable garment provided, but not put on, cover or warm you? Will food exhibited, but not eaten, satiate a craving appetite? Neither, my brethren, will a Saviour, mercifully provided for you, and tenderly proposed to you, rescue you from eternal death, and procure for you everlasting life, unless, by faith, you make him your own. G.

COMMUNICATION.

Mr. Editor,

The following sentiments of Lequinio, a member of the national convention of France, are too remarkable to pass unnoticed, and will, I think, make an interesting article for your magazine. Speaking of Jesus Christ, in his late book "On Prejudice," cap. 26, he expresses himself thus:

"He called himself the Son of God! Who among us dare say that he is not? He always displayed virtue; he always spoke according to the dictates of reason; he always preached up wisdom; he sincerely loved all men, and wished to do good even to his executioners; he developed all the principles of moral equity, and of the purest patriotism; he met danger undismayed; he showed himself averse to the great, who in all ages have made a bad use of their power; he described the hardheartedness of the rich; he attacked the pride of kings; he dared to resist even the face of tyrants; he despised glory and fortune; he was sober; he solaced the indigent; he taught the unfortunate how to suffer; he sustained weakness; he fortified decay; he consoled misfortune, and knew how to shed tears with them that wept; he taught men to subjugate their passions, to think, to reflect, to love one another, and to live happily together. He was hated by the powerful men whom he offended, and persecuted by the wicked whom he unmasked; and he died under the indignation of that blind and deceived multitude for whom he had always lived." P.

The above extract is not introduced into this work, (nor can we suppose our correspondent intended it) for the purpose of rescuing its author from the charge of infidelity which has long existed against him. Such an attempt would, unquestionably, fail. But we place it before our readers, as the testimony of an enemy to the divinity of our Saviour, when called to speak of his life and character. Ed.

EXPOSITION.

REVELATION xiii. 8.

"*The Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the World.*"

Whoever peruses the holy scriptures with that temper and attention, with which they ought always to be read, will remark innumerable expressions calculated to alarm his fears, excite his hopes, and kindle in his breast a fervid spirit of piety and devotion.

Of this description is the awful and sublime passage in the Revelations, which I have selected for the subject of my meditations. It transports us to the beginning of time, and discloses the eternal counsels of divine wisdom, and the provisions of infinite benevolence, for restoring fallen helpless man to the image of his maker, and to the favour of an offended God: it disperses the dark cloud, which sin had spread over the newly created world; it announces the opening of the gates of immortality, which had been closed against man in consequence of his disobedience and demerit; and it reveals to us the fountain in which alone the defilement of sin can be cleansed, that of the blood of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

To this object let us direct our devout contemplations; it is the rock of our faith, the source from which piety derives all its hope and confidence, a sure refuge against the calamities of this life, the promise of an eternity of bliss. "The Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world," is no unmeaning metaphor; it is Jesus, "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." This is the mystery which angels desired to look into, and which, in fulness of time, was revealed for the consolation of a guilty, desponding, and perishing world.

This is he, who was obscurely announced to our first parents, as the redeemer of their fallen race. It is to him, that the promise of the Almighty to Abraham refers, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The circumstances of the sacrifice of Isaac, afford a typical representation of the solemn and important sacrifice of the Son of God. The various expiations for sin, prescribed by the ceremonial law of the Jews, prefigure the oblation and atonement on the cross. This was the star that was to come out of Israel; and the sceptre, seen in prophetic vision by Balaam which should rise out of Jacob. This is Jesus, whose coming and sufferings are so minutely foretold and pathetically described by Isaiah. This is the son of the virgin, predicted by the same prophet; and his triumphant exclamation, "for unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace," is verified and fulfilled in the person of Jesus, "the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world."

"What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?" was the pious effusion of the royal psalmist on contemplating the wonders of the visible creation.

How would his astonishment, his rapture, his devotion have been excited, if he had seen the incarnation and sufferings of the Son of God, for the redemption of mankind. The magnificence of the orb of day attracts the admiration of the world, and his effulgence dazzles the eyes of all beholders: brilliant as he is, he is but the creature of the Almighty, appointed by him to measure time, to diffuse warmth and light, to give vigour to life, and life to vegetation. But Jesus, the sun of righteousness, the true object of spiritual contemplation, was begotten of his Father, before all worlds, dwelling in his glory from all eternity; his beams are the rays of divine mercy and benevolence, dissipating the gloom of sin, cheering the sinner's heart, kindling the flames of devotion in the pious breast, and by their animating powers recalling the dead to life, and reproducing the divine image, obscured and defaced by the pollution of sin.

Is this the language of truth or of mystery? It is both; but God has spoken, and it is our duty to believe, to be grateful, and to adore. The world by wisdom knows not God, and we know no more of him, than what he hath thought proper to reveal of *himself*. All creation is a mystery; our birth, our life, our death, and the ways of Providence, are not less mysterious to our finite understandings than our resurrection from the dead, and the redemption of mankind through the atoning blood of a crucified Saviour.

Behold here the malignity of sin, which could require so great a sacrifice! Behold, the merciful love of God which could provide it! Whilst our souls dwell in the flesh, the foul nature of sin, in its full enormity, may not be conceivable by us. We feel ourselves affected and disordered by it; and the soul, gloomy and restless under its dominion, is incapable of perceiving the mercy and benevolence of its Creator, and of that return of gratitude and affection, which his mercy and goodness every moment claim.

The diabolical explosions of malice, hatred, revenge, lust, and jealousy, which so frequently excite our detestation and abhorrence, are visible; but the malignant quality, which engenders and nourishes them, is no sensible object; nor can our observation reach all the consequences of sin. The effects of a single act of iniquity, though we cannot trace them, may extend to generations unborn; and as earthquakes and tempests disfigure and disturb the earth and its atmosphere, so sin disorders and agitates the moral world. But the moral government of the Almighty, like all his perfections, is infinite: it is not circumscribed by the sphere which we inhabit; and the contagion of human iniquity, (I mention the supposition with diffidence,) may have an influence be-

yond the limits of our earth, like the principle of attraction which, to us invisible, operates between the sun and the revolving planets. Sin is rebellion against the sovereign Ruler of the universe, it is enmity to him, and the grossest offence against his purity and holiness. Light and darkness, the concentrated splendour of a thousand suns opposed to the deepest gloom, affords a faint elucidation of the infinite opposition between the impurity of sin and the purity of our Creator. All elucidations derived from human ideas, or sensible analogies, must be infinitely inadequate to describe it; but the atonement made to divine justice for the expiation of sin, which naturally rouses all the efforts of the imagination to conceive the malignity of it, is alone a stupendous and all-sufficient demonstration of its character.

He by whom the Father made all worlds, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, who upholdeth all things by the word of his power, to whom the Father saith, "Thy throne, O God! is for ever and ever;" this divine person laid aside his glory, became man, and suffered his blood to be shed, as an atonement for the sins of the world!

The punishment of sin in the world to come, is described, in the New Testament, in terms of terrific import, in language suitable to the magnitude of the atonement required for it. The Son of God is the expiatory sacrifice: the worm that never dies, the fire that is never quenched, mark the dreadful nature of the punishment which inevitably awaits impenitent sinners. If the death of the Son of God were necessary to redeem his people from their sins, what conclusion can the consideration suggest, as to the nature of that punishment, but that indeed it must be most terrible?

Enough has now been said on the character of sin, to impress our minds with the deepest humiliation, (which, but for the light of revelation, would sink into despair,) when we reflect upon ourselves as the polluted offpring of a corrupt stock. On this point, the word of God is positive and explicit. Behold I was shapen in iniquity, says David, and in sin did my mother conceive me. How can he be clean that is born of a woman? says Job; yea, the stars are not pure in the sight of God, how much less man, that is a worm. There is none righteous, no not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God: all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, says St. Paul.

If God be of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, as the prophet Habakkuk teaches, well may we ask, in the words of Job, How can man be justified with God? Let us, then, as becometh

creatures formed out of the dust of the earth, as sinners and suppliants, prostrating ourselves before the throne of divine grace, ask of him who can alone resolve the question. His answer is ready,—Through the blood of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; for the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin.

If such, then, be the character of sin, what shall we say to those who make a mock of it, who consider the grossest violations of the laws of God as venial trespasses, and indulge their sensual appetites without fear or restraint? Poor, deluded, infatuated mortals, whom the majesty of Omnipotence awes not, who deride the terrors of his vengeance, who reject the gracious offers of his pardon and mercy, and, in the language of the New Testament, crucify Christ again. Yet think, ere the grave closes upon you, ere eternity opens to receive you, that hope will then be no more. You will then call upon the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." May the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ere yet it be too late, awaken your fears, and rouse you to repentance; and may the Holy Spirit imprint this awful truth upon your souls, and enable you, through faith in Christ, to live up to the sense of it: "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

If such, again, be the character of sin, and such the state of human nature under the dominion of it, what shall we say to others, who professing themselves believers in Christ, consider the scriptural expressions of the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, as terms of no signification, or application, to christians of these days? Are the words of our Saviour to Nicodemus of no meaning, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" and, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit?" Heaven is the residence of the spirits of the just made perfect; carnal ideas have no admittance there, and the atonement on the cross will not avail without that spiritual renewal, that purification of the heart and affections, which the gospel throughout inculcates as indispensably necessary to salvation, and ascribes to the operation of divine agency on the heart of man. To them, I also say, poor, deluded, infatuated mortals, may you, through the grace of God, be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God; and that being created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, you may not be estranged from God.

Blessed, thrice blessed, are those, whom the Holy Spirit enables to see in Jesus, as it were personified, the love of God

reconciling man to himself: who rejoice in their salvation through Christ, like a bird escaped from the snares of the fowler, like a child finding refuge in its parent's arms from impending destruction, or like a banished criminal restored to his country, and the society of his friends. Such is the joy of a true believer in Jesus, when he compares the period of his estrangement from God, with the consolations of his regenerate state. With passions subdued, and affections spiritualized, inflamed with love for God and Christ, and filled with charity to man, he finds all joy and peace in believing: he feels himself liberated from the chains of sin and death, and sees the portals of heaven unbarred for his admission, by the power of him, who first rose from the dead, and brought life and immortality into the world. He rejoices in hope, but with humility, trusting solely in Christ, who, he knows, will not suffer one of those to be lost, whom God hath given to him. In this confidence, with all patience and gratitude, he prepares to attend the bridal feast of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and assumes his wedding garment "washed white" with his blood. Believing yet humble, animated but not presumptuous, hoping yet fearing, he lifts up his eyes and his hands to God and his Saviour, and joining the chorus of the angelic host, exclaims with pious rapture, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. Amen. *Ch. Ob.*

MALACHI iv. 2. "*The SUN of righteousness shall arise with HEALING IN HIS WINGS.*"

I LATELY met with an explanation of this metaphor, so descriptive of the Redeemer's character, which was not more agreeable and satisfactory to me, than I am persuaded it must be to the readers of the magazine. An English divine having received information from a correspondent at Smyrna, of a wind which there begins to blow at the rising of the sun, so salubrious in its effects, as to be generally spoken of under the name of *the doctor*, it occurred to him, that "the wings of the wind" is a scripture phrase, and that Malachi might have known the healing virtues of the wind mentioned by his correspondent: he therefore concluded, that the prophet from thence takes his *image*, of the sun rising on the wings of healthful winds, to represent the benefit which men receive from the knowledge, the efficacy, and the Spirit of Christ, by the benefit which they receive from the rising sun, attended with breezes which refresh the spirits, and brace the nervous system.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

Extracts from the Report of the Directors of the Missionary Society, to their eleventh General Meeting, held in London, on the 8th, 9th, and 10th of May, 1805.

OTAHEITE.

In the course of the last year, we have received the journals of the missionaries at Otaheite, from October, 1802, to April, 1803. The civil war in that island, which had placed our brethren in a critical situation, having been happily brought to a close, they were enabled to pursue the object of their mission without any molestation. The brethren Jefferson and Nott, afterwards the brethren Bicknell and Wilson, made a preaching tour through different parts of the island, and published the glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ to the natives, some of whom gave them an attentive hearing, but the greater part treated their message with levity and disregard. The brethren first mentioned had an opportunity, in the course of their journey, to address nearly four thousand adult persons, which is probably more than half the total inhabitants of the island, for by the ravages of war and disease, the missionaries had reason to conclude that the inhabitants are reduced to the number of six or seven thousand souls. Their increased acquaintance with the people has discovered a dreadful degree of moral turpitude, generally prevailing among them, which has, no doubt, been much aggravated by the intercourse of wicked Europeans among them. Their principal desire has been by every means in their power to procure firearms and ammunition, which they employ every opportunity that occurs for accumulating; a circumstance by no means favourable to the missionaries, who, however, consoled themselves with this glorious truth, that "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."*

The missionaries express their deep regret that human sacrifices were still frequently offered by the chief, to render his god propitious; and that the cruel practice of murdering infants was also continued, which, with the causes before assigned, contributed to the speedy depopulation of the country.

An event took place on the 3d of September, 1803, the consequences of which the missionaries were unable to foresee. The Dart, an English brig, employed in the seal-skin trade, touched at the island, in consequence of some disappointment in the object of her voyage; by which circumstance, our brethren received a small supply of necessary articles. When the Dart was about to leave the island, and was plying in and out of the bay, waiting for some provision which had been promised, the chief (Pomarre, father of the reigning prince Otoo) was proceeding in a canoe to the vessel with two of his people, but being suddenly attacked by a violent pain, he dropped the paddle from his hand, fell down on his face in the canoe, and never uttered another word. The canoe returned to the shore, and Pomarre shortly expired.

This chief having long been the powerful friend and protector of our missionary brethren, it was natural for them to feel some apprehensions on his sudden removal. They therefore prudently requested the captain of the Dart to defer his sailing till the next day, that they might have an opportunity of ascertaining whether they might indulge the hope of continued safety under the successors of Pomarre. The result of such inquiries as a few hours admitted of their making, was, "they trusted they might rely on the assurances of Otoo and Edea, that they should remain unmolested in the exercise of their mission, whatever changes might take place in the government." The missionaries appear to have been generally treated with civility, and sometimes with kindness, in the tours they made; and, though the greater part of the persons who heard them preach the gospel, were

* The directors enjoyed the satisfaction of conversing with a gentleman who had resided some months on the island, and whose account of the state of things there, corresponded with the journals and letters of our missionaries. He confirmed the information above mentioned, concerning the avidity with which the natives procured fire arms, and said he believed they might possess about 120 musquets. He observed that the missionaries seemed to be satisfied as to their own personal safety, and thought there was no occasion for their friends to entertain any painful apprehensions concerning them.

careless and inattentive, yet a few listened with becoming regard, asked questions, and wished for further information. "On the whole," says our brethren, "although we can give no flattering hopes of the success of the gospel, yet we believe the means are not used in vain. The names of Jehovah, and Jesus Christ, are universally known, and several truths respecting them; and, as God has appointed the preaching of the word for the salvation of sinners, we hope in due time, that blessed end will be answered in Otaheite."

The directors regret that they have received no communications from Otaheite, of a later date than September 3, 1803; and it was no small addition to their concern, to be informed by the Rev. Mr. Marsden, of Port Jackson, in New South Wales, in a letter dated 10th August, 1804, that the supplies requested by the missionaries and sent out in the ships Albion and Cato in 1802, and which had been forwarded by the Alexander, captain Rhodes, had not been landed at Otaheite; for the captain, hearing of the renewal of the war with France, relinquished his design of going to Otaheite, and after having been at sea some months, returned to Port Jackson; in consequence of which, the goods were re-landed, and were found to be much damaged. A further supply of necessary and useful articles for the mission was sent out in November last, by the Argo, captain Baden, but of their arrival at New South Wales, in order to their conveyance to Otaheite, the directors have not yet been informed.

When the state of this mission was maturely considered at a special meeting of the directors, September 24, 1804, it was unanimously resolved, "That a competent supply of necessaries and conveniences for the missionaries be annually provided, and forwarded to Otaheite, either by a direct conveyance, or through the medium of the Rev. Mr. Marsden, New South Wales; and also, that a credit to the amount of 300*l.* be lodged with him, to be applied discretionally by him to such exigencies as may occasionally occur." In pursuance of the former resolution, the supply last mentioned was sent out.

The directors feel a painful concern for their brethren at Otaheite, whose patient continuance in well-doing, amidst so many dangers and discouragements, entitles them to every exertion in their behalf that can with propriety be made. It is much to be regretted, that the means of intercourse with them are so rare and so difficult; nor can the directors conceive of any practicable mode of communication, but by encouraging some mercantile persons in New South Wales, by a suitable bounty, to fit out a vessel from thence, to be employed in the seal-skin trade, or some other commercial engagement suited to the country, and who may thus be induced to visit Otaheite, and convey to them the needful supplies, and thus open a channel of communication with the society, provided that the missionaries find it their duty to persist in their labours on that island, or to make an attempt to evangelize some other of the Society Islands. This important measure is now under the most serious consideration.

[*To be continued.*]

British and Foreign Bible Society.

Extracts from the Appendix to the Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

THE first is an extract of a letter from the Rev. Dr. Dalrymple, one of the ministers of Ayr.

"'I give you joy, and would take some small share of it myself, that we have lived to the day of a British and Foreign Bible Society. In the 82d year of my age, and 59th of my ministry; next to both deaf and blind; it is little that I can do in an active way to assist in so glorious a design: but that little shall not be wanting. This evening I intend to overture our synod for a collection, after the good example of the presbytery of Glasgow, and I hope to succeed'." (p. 34.)

Mr. Kiesling a respectable merchant in Nuremberg thus writes.

"Your letter afforded me such joy that I could not contain myself, but immediately went to the Rev. John Godfried Schoener, one of the most respectable ministers of our city, in order to communicate to him the joyful news from a far country. He was no less affected than myself; and we agreed to appoint a meeting of christians friends on Ascension-day, at which we unanimously resolved to unite for the formation of a Bible Society, and by a printed letter, to invite our christian friends throughout Germany and Switzerland, to assist us in so noble an undertaking.

"When sometimes I am privileged to give away a Bible or New Testament, father and mother, son and daughter, are running after me, thanking me a hundred, and a thousand times, kissing my hand and my coat, shedding tears of

joy, and loudly exclaiming; 'May God bless you: may the Lord Jesus bless you in time and to all eternity.' Really I felt sometimes a foretaste of heavenly joy, so that I could not sufficiently bless God, for having entrusted me with the honourable commission of steward of the kind benefactions of others. But the more I disperse, the more the petitions both of ministers and schoolmasters increase, not only from Austria, but likewise from Stiria, Carinthia, and Hungary, insomuch, that I am afraid to present their petitions." (p. 36.)

The address circulated by the Nuremberg Bible Society throughout Germany closes with the following appeal.

"We confidently hope for the success of our undertaking. If in England, according to the latest accounts, even hard working artisans have contributed their mite towards the support of the Bible Society, can we suppose that less zeal for the good cause will be displayed by our German and Swiss reverers of the sacred writings?

"The inherent value of the book, the religious wants of the people, the critical circumstances of the times, the present tranquillity of the States; all these, besides many other urgent reasons, loudly call for attention to this important undertaking.

"O ye, who know and revere the Bible, which yet remains the Bible of all religious parties, lend your aid in promoting it. Ye, who, on the brink of the grave, can dispose of your property at pleasure, think on the words of the just Judge of the world, *I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink.* If the blessing be already so great for him who ministers to the bodily wants of his fellow creatures, how much greater will it be for those, who, constrained by the love of Christ, provide for satisfying the hungry after the living word of God, and lead thirsty souls to the pure wells of salvation!" (p. 41.)

From the letter of a Roman catholic priest, in Swabia, we gladly extract a few passages.

"I had the pleasure to learn, from a copy of your letter, addressed by Mr. Tobias Kiesling, of Nuremberg, the great number of zealous friends of the Bible in London, who are filled with a noble desire to send out the pure word of God, as the best preacher, into the world. This account excited in my breast the most heart-felt joy and gratitude towards that God, 'who is the only Giver of every good and perfect gift;' but I felt also lively emotions of unfeigned love and affection for you, and for all the members of that venerable Bible Society, for whom I wish a thousand blessings. May the Lord Jesus, through whom all blessings are communicated to us, be the beginning and end of their praiseworthy undertaking! and may his name be glorified for it to all eternity!

"What particularly induced me to write, was your question, whether the Bible was still prohibited to the catholics? Being convinced thereby, that you was mindful even of the poor catholics I was particularly moved and edified; for indeed, nothing is more affecting than that love which embraces all, without the least distinction; "for God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." I felt myself, therefore, constrained to thank you, in the name of all honest and well disposed catholics, for these your fraternal sentiments.

"In answer to your question, I observe, properly speaking, the Bible has never been prohibited to the catholics. The council of Trent only states, *Indiscriminata lectio Sacræ Scripturæ interdicta est.* Well informed catholics took this always in that sense only: that not all books of the Bible, *promiscuously*, should be put into the hands of the common people, refering chiefly to some books of the Old Testament. Besides, this prohibition of the council of Trent has never been admitted as binding by the whole body of the Roman catholic clergy in Germany; but so much is true, that all blind bigots of our church have always spread the opinion, that it was entirely forbidden for all laymen to read the Bible; and this prejudice, is, alas! still deeply prevalent among the greater part of the people. There are, however, at present, many of our clergymen, both in Swabia and Bavaria, who strongly recommended the reading of the Bible, chiefly of the New Testament; and do every thing in their power to promote it. I have, for my own part, distributed many New Testaments, and some Bibles, among better enlightened catholics; and several of my dear brethren in Christ do the same. We are, however, not able to satisfy all the demands for Bibles." (p. 43, 44.)

"I am sure we could dispose of a good number of Bibles and New Testaments. The people seem to get more and more desirous of the Bible; and the number of clergymen is increasing, who not only would tolerate but commend the reading of it.

"I feel a very great desire to witness

the formation of a similar Bible Society amongst the Roman catholics; & indeed, I will make some attempts, though I foresee many difficulties; and can hardly suppose that so many active and benevolent friends of the Bible are to be found amongst the Roman catholics, as would be requisite for such an undertaking. Your question, however, respecting the catholics, inspires me with the hope, that your society is desirous to extend its beneficial influence likewise to the catholics, wishing only to know, whether a dispersion of Bibles amongst them would be practicable: and, indeed, it would not only be practicable, but desirable in the highest degree." (p. 44.)

"I cannot express, in terms sufficiently strong, the fervency of my joy, and love towards all who, throughout England, heartily believe in Jesus Christ as their only Saviour, and zealously endeavour to extend the Redeemer's kingdom. I embrace them all as the beloved and elect of God, as friends and brethren in Christ, let them be of whatever name, or belonging to whatever church or denomination. The more distant the countries, and the more different the outward forms and establishments are, the more I rejoice, if I am privileged to hear, that our ever-faithful Lord and Saviour is gathering from amongst them a flock of believing people. Truly, God has a numerous *Army of Reserve* in England, who do not bow before the Baal of the age, nor sacrifice to the god of the times. Let all who know his name, glorify him for this mercy! May the peace of God, and the all-sufficient grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!" (p. 45.)

We add one more extract. It is taken from a letter dated in North Wales, Feb. 22, 1805.

"There are none of our poor people willing to live and die without contributing their mites towards forwarding so glorious a design. Their zeal and eagerness in the good cause, surpasses every thing I have ever before witnessed. On several occasions we have been obliged to check their liberality, and take half what they offered, and what we thought they ought to give. In very many instances, servants have given one-third of their wages for the year. In one instance, a poor servant-maid put down one guinea on the plate, being one-third of her wages: that it might not be perceived what she put down, she covered the guinea with a halfpenny. One little boy had with much trouble, reared a brood of chickens; when the collection came to be made, he sold them all, and gave every farthing he got for them towards it; and this was his whole stock, and all the living that he had. Innumerable instances of a similar nature might be mentioned. Great joy prevails universally at the thought that poor heathens are likely soon to be in possession of a Bible; and you will never hear a prayer put up, without a petition for the Bible Society and heathen nations." (p. 60.)

For the Evangelical Intelligencer.

On Lord's day, Feb. 16th last, a neat stone meeting house, 55 feet by 45, was opened for the worship of Almighty God, in Tredyffrin township, Chester county, Pennsylvania. It belongs to the Baptist church in that place, who, for many years, have found their ancient house of worship too inconvenient for their increasing congregation. The day was unusually pleasant for the season of the year, and the concourse of people which assembled, was unusually numerous.

The exercises, which were solemnly impressive, were conducted in the following manner. Reading of selected scriptures, hymn, first prayer, & a sermon from Eph. v. 20, by the Rev. Dr. Rogers of Philadelphia. Hymn, second prayer, and a sermon from Psalm cl. 1, by the Rev. H. G. Jones of Roxborough. Hymn, concluding prayer, and the benediction, by the Rev. David Jones, pastor of the church at Tredyffrin R.

OBITUARY.

MEMOIRS OF MRS. HANNAH HODGE.

[*Concluded from page* 46.]

In 1745, as nearly as can be ascertained, the subject of this narrative was married to Mr. Hugh Hodge. He too was one to whom the labours of Mr. Whitefield had been remarkably blest; and was chosen one of the first deacons of the church which, as we have already seen, was formed by an association of the particular friends and adherents of that eminent preacher. Mr. Hodge "used the office of a deacon well;" sustaining it with great fidelity and reputation to

the day of his death. On his side, as well as on that of his wife, a regard to religious comfort and improvement had a governing influence in the choice which they made of each other as partners for life; and experience fully demonstrated, that on both sides a wise and happy choice had been formed. Seldom has religion appeared to more advantage in the conjugal relation, than in that which subsisted between Mr. and Mrs. Hodge. For nearly forty years they were emphatically "helps-mete" to each other in christian duty, and in their journey to the heavenly rest. "They walked before the Lord in all his ordinances and commandments," with a blamelessness of which the examples are rare.

Coming together with a very small portion of worldly property between them, they had to provide for their subsistence by their own efforts. These efforts were mutual, strenuous, and constant; and by the smiles of Providence, such was their success in business, that they were able not only to live in a comfortable and reputable manner; but to show a most amiable example of hospitality, to perform numerous acts of charity and liberality, to be among the foremost in the support of the gospel, and, after all, to remain possessed of a handsome capital.

This pious couple had two children, a son and a daughter. The daughter died in infancy; but the son lived to grow up, to receive a liberal education, to study physic, and to give promise of future usefulness to the world, and of comfort to his parents. But these expectations were soon blasted. During the revolutionary war, he went to sea, on a voyage of enterprize, with a number of other promising youth of the city of Philadelphia, and no certain information was ever received afterwards, either of them, or the vessel in which they sailed. The probability is that all were buried together in the bosom of the ocean. The anxiety which Mr. and Mrs. Hodge experienced through a long period of time, during which there was some hope that their son might be alive, and the grief which they suffered when they were at last obliged to consider it as a melancholy fact that their only child was no more, can better be supposed than described. It is of more importance to remark, that their distress, great as it was, never sunk them into dejection or despondence, never brought from them any unavailing or unchristian complaints, but was borne with a resignation truly christian, and a fortitude truly exemplary. Mrs. Hodge, who had both hopes and fears, in regard to the real piety of her son, told the writer of these memoirs that she had passed many an hour in musing on what was probably his eternal state. "After all," said she, "it must be left entirely with a sovereign and holy God; but I may, must, and do hope, if I get to heaven, to find him there."

The death of her daughter, who was her first child, she has been heard to affirm, gave her very little disturbance. "I had been married eleven years," said she to an intimate friend, "and had no child. Nor was I very anxious on the subject, till on a certain occasion, I was much interested in seeing an infant devoted to God in baptism, in our church. I was then forcibly struck with the thought, that a christian parent possesses an unspeakable privilege, who gives birth to an immortal being, and is permitted to give it away to God, in this his instituted ordinance. On the spot I fervently prayed for this privilege, if it should be consistent with God's will to grant it; and I solemnly vowed that if it should be granted, I would, by his grace assisting me, unreservedly devote to him the child which he should give me. My prayer was answered, my vow was performed, and my child was taken to God, all within a year."

During the life of deacon Hodge, his house was constantly open for the reception of all *evangelical* clergymen who visited the city. The cordial welcome which always met them there, and the pleasure which they both gave and received, made them love to resort to this happy dwelling. To many of them it was, for several years, *a home*, to which they went with as much freedom as they would have felt in going to a house of their own. Such, indeed, was the deep interest which both Mr. and Mrs. Hodge took in every thing that related to the church, such their eminent piety, and such the influence of their opinion upon others, that their sentiments on many interesting subjects, were asked by their clerical visitors, and are well known to have had weight in several important public concerns.

The house of deacon Hodge was also remarkable as a place in which religious associations, and assemblies of various kinds, were frequently held. Pious conferences, prayer meetings, and the exhortations of the ministers of the gospel to as many as the house and yard could contain, were here always welcome, often witnessed, and in many instances eminently blessed.

A general outline has now been exhibited of the life and habits of this pious couple, for a long series of years. Harmony between themselves, active attention to necessary worldly business, with a singular beneficence, charity, and piety, rendered them shining examples of practical and primitive christianity.

Deacon Hodge died A. D. 1783. By his will he left the use of nearly his whole estate to his wife during her life, and at her death, made it a fund for the education of poor and pious youth for the gospel ministry, in the college of New-Jersey. Mrs. Hodge bore the loss of her husband, not indeed without keen distress, for all her feelings were remarkably acute, but yet with such a becoming and sweet submission to the divine will, as was extremely amiable and instructive. She cherished a fond remembrance of her husband through the whole remainder of her life, on all occasions she honoured his memory, often spoke of him with tenderness, and yet, after her first sorrows, never with much apparent emotion, but in the same manner in which she would have mentioned a dear absent friend, whom she shortly expected to meet again. Happy spirits! ye are now united, never more to part.

The house of Mrs. Hodge, after the death of her husband, was the same hospitable mansion as before, the same place for sacred conferences, and meetings for prayer and religious improvement. One of these meetings was held weekly at her house till a short time before her death, and was, as she acknowledged, a valuable substitute for the privilege of public worship, from which her infirmities at that time often detained her. For many years after the death of her husband she likewise continued the business of shop-keeping, to which she had long been accustomed. He had left her an easy maintenance, independently of any exertions of her own. But she continued in her former occupation from considerations which manifested equally her benevolence and piety, and her good sense and knowledge of human nature. The income from her shop, which was considerable, was almost wholly applied to charitable uses, and sometimes she even added to it from her other resources. Thus, though she did not labour for her own subsistence, she had the satisfaction of providing more extensively than she could otherwise have done for the poor, the friendless, and the pious; and while she performed an important duty, gratified highly the feelings of her heart. But she also well knew the effect of habit on herself. She knew that having long been accustomed to fill up a large portion of the day with active business, she would be likely to feel the want of it, both in body and mind, when it should be discontinued. Accordingly, when her infirmities at last compelled her to relinquish her employment, she declared that she regretted it, principally because she found it unfavourable to her religious state. "You are very fortunate, madam," said a friend to her pleasantly, "very fortunate, indeed, in having no care or anxiety about the world; no business to take up your time or attention; nothing to do from morning till night, but to read, and meditate, and pray, and converse with your friends." "For all that," answered she, "I have not half so much comfort, not even in religion, as when I was bustling half the day behind the counter. I need more variety than I now get. I become moped and stupified for the want of something to rouse me. Beside all this, vain, foolish, wicked, and vexatious thoughts are almost constantly working their way into my mind, because I have so much of that time, which you talk of, for meditation. And, in addition to all, I become lazy and indolent, and do nothing as I ought to do. No, I was a great deal better off when I had some worldly business to which I could attend moderately. It did me good in every way. I must get along as well as I can, now that I am incapable of business, but I find it no advantage, but the contrary, to be without it." It is believed that this was the language of truth, of nature, of experience. Those who have led a busy life should contract their business as age advances, but they will seldom find it beneficial, even to a life of religion, to be wholly unemployed in worldly concerns.

Mrs. Hodge had three attacks of an apoplectic or paralytic kind, within the last sixteen years of her life. But she wonderfully recovered from them, and possessed all her faculties, in a degree of vigour beyond what is usually seen in persons of her age, till about two years before her death. Then her decay became rapid and visible. On the 16th of Dec. 1805, in going to bed, she was seized with a fit. Medical aid was used to restore her, and she recovered so far as to know and speak to those who were about her, especially to the pastors of the church to which she belonged. In the course of the evening, they both, at different times, prayed with her, and she appeared capable of joining in the service,

at least for a part of the time. But her mind was evidently in a broken, wandering, and enfeebled state. Still, however, it seemed to draw to the centre which had so long attracted it. "Help, Lord Jesus! help; come Lord Jesus, come quickly," were sentences that she often repeated. She had a succession of slight paralytic affections during the night, and early in the morning *fell asleep in the Lord*, expiring without a sigh, a struggle, or so much as the motion of a single muscle.

Few persons in the city of Philadelphia had so extensive a religious acquaintance as Mrs. Hodge. To them these memoirs will be interesting, and to others a part of them may be useful. They will be closed with an attempt to give the most striking features of her character.

Among the natural powers of her mind she was most of all distinguished by that faculty which has been denominated *common sense*, and of which it has been truly said, that "though no science it is fairly worth the seven." Except on the subject of religion, she had read but little; and in what is usually understood by mental improvement, she had made no great progress. Her powers of judging and distinguishing were naturally strong, and these she had improved by thinking much and observing accurately. Hence she seldom gave an opinion which did not deserve to be heard with respect, and which was not proved by experience to be just. This was the source of the influence which she possessed, and which was singularly great. Often has the writer of these sketches remarked, that she was a striking example of what solid sense, sterling integrity, and sincere piety will effect, without the advantages of refined education, great wealth, or even of that sex which usually claims the highest respect. It was his belief that for many years her opinion had more influence in the large religious society to which she belonged, than that of any other individual in it. Yet it may be remarked with truth, and the truth is much to her honour, that she did not appear to know the influence that she possessed. She was truly diffident and unassuming, and never intruded her opinions upon others, nor delivered them as if she supposed they were important.

She possessed *great sensibility and strong passions*, which caused her many a sore conflict. Yet the united influence of religion and good sense had given her, as a habit, a remarkable self-command; so that she was capable of managing, with a happy address, the most refractory spirits of others. She could remain self-possessed and silent, till the time for administering reproof was come, and then give it with the most complete effect. Many examples of this were known to her acquaintance.

Kindness and affability were distinguishing features of her character. They rendered her company unusually agreeable and pleasing; so that even the young and the gay sought it, and were often delighted with it. They could not but admire in her a strictness of piety, united with a tenderness, an attention, and a desire to give pleasure, which they seldom found. To the last she was visited by the young as well as by the old.

Her *benevolence and liberality* have already been mentioned. Many will feel their loss, and, ungrateful as the world is, many will long remember with gratitude the benefits she conferred.

She was remarkable for *sincerity*. There was nothing that she abhorred more than dissimulation or hypocrisy. She could not endure it in others, and she stood at the greatest distance from it herself. She loved to hear and to speak the truth in all its simplicity. On some occasions, the frankness and explicitness of her manner gave offence. Such instances, however, were not numerous; for though she would never speak what she did not believe, she was often silent, when she differed from the sentiments of others, and when she thought that speaking would do no good. But her silence on many such occasions was eloquent, for it was not easy for her countenance to conceal any sentiment that she strongly felt.

In *domestic life* she was indeed *a bright example*. Intent on doing good in this, which is the principal sphere of female usefulness, and having always a small family of her own, she brought up a number of orphan or destitute children, received several female boarders into her house,* and made it a charitable asylum to others who had once seen better days. Many of these, especially the youth, received the most essential benefit from her example, her conversation, her instruction, her admonitions, and her

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* The last of these was the aged and amiable widow of the late Rev. Dr. Finly, whose company and conversation were the principal earthly solace of Mrs. Hodge in the last years of her life: And to whom the writer here begs leave to dedicate these memoirs of her dear departed friend.

prayers. A domestic incident on which she loved to dwell was the conversion and piety of a native African woman, whom her husband had purchased, and whom she had assiduously taught the principles of religion. This woman died at last in christian faith and triumph, uttering, in broken English, sentiments that would have adorned the lips of the oldest and best instructed saint.

The piety of Mrs. Hodge was indeed *eminent*, but its peculiar characteristic was *humility*. Those who had heard much of her did not always find their expectations realized, when they became acquainted with her. They found that she was not one of those who anticipate continually and with confidence the heavenly joys, who are raised by this above all fear of death, and who seem to be rapped into a better world while they remain in this. A person who, from what he had heard of her, was led to believe that she possessed something of this character, after a short acquaintance, offered to present her with a handsome copy of Mrs. Rowe's Devout Exercises of the Heart. Her reply to him was this: "I know something of that book, sir, and I thank you sincerely for offering it to me. But I must say that it is a book which does not suit me. I wish I was more like Mrs. Rowe than I am. But her exercises were so far superior to mine, and her descriptions of them are so strong, that, to tell you the truth, they rather discourage me than help me. If you please, let the book be given to Mrs. —— I think it will exactly suit her." In this there was no affectation, to which indeed she was a stranger. She believed that others had made attainments far beyond her own, attainments which she wished to make, and mourned that she wanted; but to which, as she believed she did not possess them, she would make no pretensions. There were some considerable portions of her life, and many short seasons scattered through almost the whole of it, in which she rejoiced and triumphed in God her Saviour. But as *a habit* she did by no means possess the "full assurance of hope." On the contrary, she had frequent doubts and fears, and great anxiety about her spiritual state; though never, after her first exercises, did she sink into any thing like despondency. She was often searching her heart, questioning and examining herself, to ascertain whether she was truly a disciple of Christ; and this continued to the very last. Few christians have ever more fully renounced themselves than she, and expected salvation as the purchase of the Saviour, and the free gift of God through him. The idea of *human merit* in the sight of God was the abhorrence of her soul. Some of the poor whom she relieved, would sometimes suggest that her abundant charities would render her the favourite of heaven. Such intimations she always received with manifest disgust, and it is believed never failed to reprove the parties who gave them, and to endeavour to convey juster notions of the manner in which we must be recommended to God. She panted ardently after holiness and inward conformity to the divine law, but a clear sight and a deep sense of her remaining depravity, made her abhor herself, and cleave to the perfect righteousness of Christ, as the only foundation of her hope. Newton's Letters, and Owen on Indwelling Sin, were, next to the holy scriptures, the books which she most delighted to read.

Thus has an imperfect sketch been given of the character of this excellent woman, of whom a man who had seen much of the world, was heard to say, as he followed her corpse to the grave, "I would rather be Mrs. Hodge than Buonaparte." Beyond all question, her life was more enviable, her death more happy, and her eternal destiny infinitely more desirable, than that of any unsanctified hero, patriot, or sage, whose actions or whose wisdom have furnished the theme of the poet's song, the materials of the historian's volumes, and the objects of emulation to a blinded world, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; yea saith the Spirit for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

REV.D WILLIAM TENNENT.

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